

**SITUATION REPORT NO. 13**  
**INCIDENT NO. 99-009**  
**DATE: May 14, 1999      TIME: 3:00 p.m.**

TO: Governor Edward T. Schafer  
State Capitol  
Bismarck, ND 58505

1. NATURE OF DISASTER: Spring flooding – Above normal soil moisture content throughout North Dakota, compounded by seven years of flooding, has resulted in overland and river flooding.
2. DEATHS AND INJURIES: No change from previous reports.
3. DAMAGES: Prolonged flooding from snowmelt and runoff from heavy rains have caused rivers in north central and eastern North Dakota to rise to near flood stage, according to the National Weather Service (NWS). A flood warning remains in place for the Souris River, where levels had risen to a few feet above flood stage at four locations and were expected to remain steady at those levels for the next few days. The Souris River at Folxholm, where the flood stage is 10 feet, measured 11.14 feet on May 14. At Towner, the river had risen to 55.3 feet by May 14; flood stage is 52 feet. Also by May 14, the river reached 12.92 feet at Bantry, where flood stage is 11 feet, and to 15.43 feet in Westhope, where flood stage is 10 feet.

NWS hydrologists have issued a flood warning for the lower James River Basin to include southern Stutsman, LaMoure and Dickey Counties. Minor flooding has been occurring along the James River and its tributaries, which include the Maple, Elm, Bear, Bonehill, Cottonwood and Beaver Creeks. The level measured 12.36 feet on May 14. The James River at LaMoure is expected to rise to 12.5 feet; flood stage is 14 feet. Additional rainfall, however, could put the crest over flood stage at LaMoure. The NWS reported that soils in the basin are saturated, water tables are high, and retention ponds are filled to capacity. Any additional rainfall that occurs would runoff quickly, compounding the flood threat. In Ludden, where the flood stage is 12 feet, the James River had risen to 13.1 feet. The river at Pingree crested at 10 feet on May 13, one foot above flood stage. The level had dropped slightly by May 14 to 9.59 feet.

Heavy rains that caused increased runoff into the upper Sheyenne River have resulted in increased flows from the Baldhill Dam into the lower portions of the river. In Valley City, where flood stage is 13 feet, the Sheyenne River crested on May 13 at 11.2 feet and will remain steady at that level for the next few days. The river has risen to within one-half foot of the 11-foot flood stage at Lisbon and will remain steady at that level for several days. The Sheyenne River is expected to rise to one-half foot above the 16.5-foot flood stage at West Fargo by May 14 and to its 16-foot flood stage at Kindred by May 19.

The Maple River, crested at Enderlin at 10.5 feet on May 12-13; flood stage is 9 feet. Meanwhile, the Goose River began a slow fall on May 14 after cresting at 10.5 feet at Hillsboro, where the flood stage is seven feet.

In eastern North Dakota, the Red River at Fargo crested at 17.36 feet on May 10; flood stage is 17 feet. The level on May 14 at Fargo was 16.83 feet. The river at Grand Forks is expected to crest at 36 to 38 feet on May 17-18. Flood stage at Grand Forks is 28 feet. Further downstream, the river is expected to crest near the 32-foot flood stage at Drayton late next week and at its 42-foot flood stage at Pembina on May 26.

Recent rains have caused widespread damages in the city of Northwood in Grand Forks County. Flood waters have caused basement damages to 278 homes and businesses. A lift station submersible pump failed when water caused a short in a wire. The city has been pumping water from a lift station into the streets after receiving permission from the N.D. Department of Health.

Residents have been asked to limit their water usage. Flood waters were also threatening the city's inert landfill, which has been closed. As a result, residents have been unable to haul flood debris from basements to the landfill.

Along the Devils Lake shoreline, rising waters are encroaching on 11 Creel Township homes, the Ramsey County Rural Utilities' sewer line, telephone lines and paved roads. Severe erosion has occurred at two of the utility's lift stations, threatening service to lakeshore residents. The access road to Peterson Subdivision has been inundated by rising flood waters, limiting access for four families.

Residents of Tappen and Dawson, Kidder County, have reported that flood waters have risen up to four feet in their homes. In Dawson, basement walls in two homes collapsed. All east west streets are under water. In both towns, furnace fuel has been leaking, and electrical cords have been nailed to basement ceilings to avoid electrical problems. Lagoons are full with extensive pumping efforts underway because sewers in both towns are unable to keep up with high water flows. A resident of Dawson escaped injury when a road underneath his pickup truck collapsed, trapping the vehicle.

In McIntosh County, the water supply for the city of Venturia is in jeopardy because flood waters are encroaching on a transformer at the city well. The Venturia Lake has been rising steadily. In addition, a mail route is threatened by flood waters, limiting access to a cancer patient who receives medication by mail. Floodwaters are also surrounding a farmstead, limiting access.

Landslides have damaged four sites on the Barnes County Rural Water line, leaving homes without water for intermittent periods. Flood waters have risen to the shoulder of old N.D. Highway 10 at Hobart Lake, a detour for I-94. County officials have stated that if this detour is lost, traffic on I-94 could be rerouted approximately 50 miles. At least five homes in Hastings, located in southern Barnes County, have failed sewers, and one homeowner reported basement flooding caused by an overflowing ditch. Homeowners in the city of Oriska have reported extensive basement flooding. Flood waters have also affected the public septic system.

Rains of three to six inches that fell May 7-10 have aggravated ongoing septic problems experienced by the city of Ludden in Dickey County. The Elm and Maple Rivers are full, and culverts have been washed out. The city of Oakes has restricted water usage because of sewer capacity problems. The system has been unable to handle additional ground water that has been penetrating the sewer mains. Wave action from flood waters is threatening township roads. Some roads are only accessible by using four-wheel-drive vehicles.

In McHenry County, nearly all 140-plus residents in Karlsruhe are experiencing basement water problems. Officials estimate that approximately 30 percent of the southern portion of the city is inundated with flood waters. Streets have been damaged by these waters. Crews are monitoring the city sewer lift station on a 24-hour basis, and large pumps have been purchased to prevent sewer backup into homes. In Drake, flood waters are encroaching on the city well house. Excessive rains and high water tables have caused water seepage into basements of homes. Throughout the county, farmers have reported that driveways are inundated by rising waters. Soggy soil conditions and flood waters have made it difficult for farmers to take cattle to pastures and to deliver feed. Willow Road was closed and traffic was rerouted after eight inches of flood waters from the Snake Creek began flowing over the roadway. All 13 homes in Kief have water in their basements.

The Pierce County Water Board reported that 12 farms in the Devils Lake Basin are threatened by rising flood waters. In addition, the emergency manager has received 14 complaints of water in basements. Private drives throughout the county are also inundated. County and township roads west of N.D. Highway 3 and north of N.D. Highway 2 are inundated. The N.D. Department of Transportation has closed N.D. Highway 60 because of 12.5 inches of water flowing over the roadway.

Abnormally high amounts of rainfall are washing out roads, culverts and bridges in Wells County. Flooded basements have been reported in Fessenden, Harvey, other small towns and rural areas. Water pressure has caused some of these basements to collapse. Private wells have also

collapsed, leaving rural residents without sanitary water supplies.

In Towner County, recent rain of up to seven inches continues to aggravate road problems. Some farm families are dependent on four-wheel-drive vehicles to reach their homes.

Approximately 95 percent of homeowners in Willow City, Bottineau County, have reported basement water problems. Roads are deteriorating and at risk of inundation. The lift station is having difficulty keeping up with demand. The city has approximately 280 residents.

Several hundred commercial and residential basements in Ward County have sustained water damage. The city of Minot's storm sewer system has been overwhelmed by excessive runoff, and severe erosion has occurred to a newly-constructed water delivery channel designed to handle runoff near Burlington. Road and culvert washouts have been reported throughout the county.

Rainfall amounts ranging from two to eight inches have saturated soils in Traill County, where water is flowing over county and township roads. Homeowners throughout the county, and in particular the Hatton, Mayville and Portland areas, have reported basement water problems. Floodwaters are causing problems at the Mayville and Hillsboro golf courses. East of Mayville, an approach to a bridge has been washed away, the wing wall of the bridge abutment has broken, and the road has caved in. Several culvert inlets and gravel roadways are also being washed away. Debris has been building up around two bridges.

4. RESOURCES:

LOCAL: No change from previous reports.

STATE: No change from previous reports.

FEDERAL: No change from previous reports.

5. VOLUNTEER ACTION: The Salvation Army delivered 200 gallons of bottled water, and the American Red Cross sent 300 gallons of bottled water, to Rolette County residents whose private wells had been contaminated by flood waters.

The Red Cross has been assisting Ward County residents who are coping with water damages.

6. MAJOR ACTIONS: Governor Ed Schafer on March 13 outlined a three-point action plan to bring relief to the people of the Devils Lake Basin. The action plan includes:

- Construction of a channel from Devils Lake to Stump Lake, providing two feet of relief for Devils Lake. Devils Lake has risen to a level where a natural flow to Stump Lake is imminent, but without a channel, relief would be insufficient and slow. The Governor said he is demanding action by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) on the Stump Lake plan.
- Pursuit of a *temporary* emergency outlet in the vicinity of Twin Lakes, allowing expedited movement of water into the Sheyenne River. As the Governor stated, "The most important feature of this option is that it allows us to move water almost immediately."
- Increased pressure on the USACE to implement a permanent West End outlet.

Governor Schafer sent letters to congressional leadership and top USACE personnel urging their personal visits to Devils Lake. The Governor, the State Engineer of the N.D. State Water Commission and the North Dakota Emergency Management State Director traveled to Washington D.C. on May 14 to meet with North Dakota's congressional delegation and USACE officials.

Since the last Situation Report, issued on May 11, Kidder, Logan, Mountrail and Sheridan Counties have issued disaster declarations. The Steele County Commission declared a rural utilities disaster for Sheyenne Valley Electric Cooperative of Finley. The Wells County Commission has issued an emergency declaration, as well as the city of Karlsruhe in McHenry County.

State Water Commission staff has been working with the Rolette County Water Board members to develop protective measures for cabins and homes along Wakopa Creek and Upsilon Lake. Flood waters threaten these homes.

The USACE has provided two 12-inch pumps for flood-fight efforts in McIntosh County. Staff is also evaluating lake level protection measures for the Lakewood Subdivision, located along the shores of Devils Lake.

Staff with the Grand Forks City/County Health Department plan to set up a temporary office in Northwood the week of May 17 to assist residents with health issues and cleanup measures. In the city of Grand Forks, officials have decided to leave in place a temporary clay dike on Belmont Road until the Red River at Grand Forks has crested on May 17-18.

The city of Oriska is pumping a small slough in an effort to protect homes, a street and a church.

Pierce County commissioners have diked a spot along Spring Lake in Spring Lake Township in an effort to keep water from traveling into McHenry County.

The city of Karlsruhe has hired a contractor to remove existing street culverts to facilitate diverting water from the city.

Ward County road crews are working to re-establish emergency access on a Rushville Township Road. The township has experienced road washout in several locations. Crews in Iona Flat Township are also repairing roads, and the city of Minot Public Works Department has been taking emergency measures to protect lift stations and the storm sewer system.

7. ASSISTANCE NEEDED: Assistance has been provided, as reported.
8. OUTSIDE HELP ON SCENE: Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), USACE, Red Cross, consulting engineers, State DOT staff and members of the N.D. Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD).
9. OTHER: Situation Reports published by the N.D. Division of Emergency Management are posted on the Division's Internet home page. The address is: <http://www.state.nd.us/dem>.

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Douglas C. Friez, State Director